

2008 Training Portfolio Grade 12

KENTUCKY WRITING PORTFOLIO Table of Contents Grade 12

Student Signature Sheet Included and Signed

(Y)

N

(Circle One)

Number
of pieces

Category/Descriptor

Content area
At least one piece must come
from a content area other than
English/ language arts

Page

1	Reflective Writing (e.g., letter, personal essay)		
	Title: Letter to Mrs. E	English	1
1	Personal Expressive OR Literary Writing personal narrative, memoir, personal essay, story, poem, script, play		
	Title: A Hard Days Night	English	5
1	Transactive Writing various authentic genres (forms)		
	Title: United We Stand	World Civilization	9
1	Transactive Writing with an analytical or technical focus various authentic genres (forms)		
	Title: Hail to the Chief tain	English	12
4	Total (must equal 4)		

4/4/07

After the Table of Contents has been reviewed for accuracy and completeness prior to scoring, the person helping the student complete the portfolio should initial and date in the space provided to the left.

Student Signature Sheet

(Required in Each Portfolio)

Please read the Note to Students and Teachers below before signing the following statements.

Required Verification Signature

The pieces in this portfolio are my own original work. I am the author of all the pieces in my portfolio. I may have talked about my work (through conferencing) with my teacher, family, and friends, but I have made any changes and corrections myself. I did my own writing, typing, and/or word processing (unless otherwise indicated by a teacher's signature in the box below labeled "IEP/504 Plan/Program Services Plan Adaptations").

T. B.
Student Signature

IEP/504 Plan/Program Services Plan (LEP) Adaptations (requires teacher signature):
Teacher Signature: _____

Optional Permission

I agree to allow my portfolio to be photocopied for use by others outside my school as an example of student work. I understand that my name, the names of my school and town, and any other identifying information I may have used in my writing will be removed before my portfolio is copied.

T. B.
Student Signature (optional)

Required Verification Signature: It is required that the work contained in each portfolio is the original work of the student. Every portfolio must include the statement, signed by the student, that the work in the portfolio is his/her original work. This sheet must be placed in the portfolio. If the verification statement is not signed, the portfolio will receive a performance rating of Incomplete.

Optional Permission: The use of actual student portfolios is critical in teacher training and is essential for quality control checks during statewide rescoring activities. Students are requested, but not required, to give permission for this purpose and should sign the optional student signature above if they agree.

Please note that portfolios are included in any statewide rescoring activities even if neither statement is signed.

March 24, 2007

Dear Mrs. E _____

This may seem out of the blue, but I am writing to tell you thanks. As I am sure you remember, you were my third grade teacher. What you may not realize is that your class was my first memory of writing. You may recall the vocabulary tests we had every week. While seemingly impossible words were crammed into our developing minds, I was the child who would now be described as having an attention deficit. As I was drawing action heroes (poorly) and practicing my cartography skills while sketching treasure maps that led to nothing more than a bobby pin or some other imagination inducing tool of childhood, other kids were writing. One skill that never struck me as important or especially fun was writing until the day you introduced a new idea. We would use our vocabulary words in a short story. The idea was to help us learn the proper context and spelling of the increasingly difficult words, but it did much more.

When we had a list that included the word "laundry", I couldn't imagine any way to use the word. I decided to use it the way I knew best. "The Adventures of Laundry Man" were born. I don't remember the exact storyline, but I'm sure it involved a ridiculous plot of an overactive imagination. This was my first story, and my first real writing experience. I have only grown from there. No more silly escapades of an imaginary protagonist with a fetish for clean clothes. My idea development and purpose have improved dramatically. The choppy, poorly constructed sentences have been replaced with well-built and carefully planned rows of written word and imagination. I've even found the ever elusive "voice" missing from many of my previous literary endeavors.

Idea development improves with age. As I've grown older I've become more mature and aware of a wide variety of topics, feelings, and how to write about them. One way to expedite the improvement process of your idea development is by reading critically and studying articles. My mother is a librarian. Her attempts to motivate me to read lengthy books are usually in vain; because of my busy sports schedule, I rarely have time to settle in and read a novel. However, she has succeeded in getting me to read magazines. Their interesting and concise format has me hooked from the cover. I love to read about politics, sports, economics and other ostensibly mundane topics. By following examples of these well written professional articles, all of my writing has improved exponentially. I now have a direction when I record my thoughts on paper. Instinctively, I find my bearings as I write.

Another advancement in my idea development over the years is a result of the numerous articles I have composed throughout high school. After several research papers and analytical pieces, my investigative skills have dramatically improved. Combined with my passion for learning, my ability to use statistics and documented research helps forge a cogent argument. This is one skill of which I am proud. My idea development has progressed leaps and bounds since the days of "Laundry Man," and there is always room for improvement.

The unorganized structure of my past documents has transformed itself into a strict format that keeps the story moving along. This is an attribute "Laundry man" severely needed. Beginning with keyboarding my freshman year and continuing with computer applications my sophomore year, the formats of letters, articles, and nearly all other forms of papers came easily. It was the numerous worksheets and several practice

techniques that helped me develop the majority of my newly acquired skills. The most memorable worksheet in recent years was one on sentence combining. As a two person effort, the class competed to see which team could transform a page of short sentences that tell a story into a condensed, more concise tale. Not only was this a competition that my friend and I eventually won, it was an excellent learning tool. I learned the principles of sentence variation. I began to understand the difficulty in relaying complex ideas through simple sentences and realized that I want people to focus on the content of my sentences rather than the rhythm. Through my aforementioned classes and worksheets I found comfort and confidence in every format of writing and learned the proper ways to sculpt a sentence. At the time it's hard to see how some projects, worksheets and papers are helping you. It's when you use the skills you practice that you notice the difference.

The hardest writing concept for me to grasp was voice. So vaguely described and intangible, "voice" was my literary holy grail, and I had it all along. I've been a character all my life, full of personality and charisma. This subconsciously transcended to my writing and became apparent during my first broadcast media class. As a host of my own segment of the show, I was responsible for writing my own jokes and stories. My personality was evident in all of my writings. The conversational style of my writing was obvious, and it wasn't until a recent reflection that I realized where it came from. For years in middle school, my source for social interaction was the internet and instant messengers; it was also where the majority of my writing took place. Recently MySpace has become a popular communication tool of mine. All of these require a certain sense of voice in the text. The necessity of letting people know how you feel through your written word helped me greatly improve my voice in professional pieces. When people can read

your feelings and emotions without seeing your face or hearing your tone, you know your voice is being heard through writing.

From the poorly constructed, yet imaginative, stories of Laundry Man, to the well researched articles and descriptive personal pieces, my writing has improved to the highest degree. I wanted to write and thank you for your dedication to literacy. Without your encouragement and guidance I may never have taken writing seriously. There is still room for advancement and I can't wait to write you again with even more tales of improvement. I know you're proud!

Thanks so much!

A former student

P.S. I'll see you at church Sunday!!!

A Hard Days Night

Like the calm before a storm, the day was deadly silent. I glanced to the left, to the right and realized that a difficult task awaited me. I began to realize, for the next twenty minutes I will be pushing my body to the limit. All my training rested solely on today. I yearned to make this day special. I gazed down at my chest, making certain my number was securely pinned to my shirt. I knelt and pulled my shoestrings tight. My feet numbed, but not from lack of circulation. I was nervous. I made sure I was in my proper box, in the proper position. After all the time I had put into my training, nothing could go wrong.

"Runners are you ready?" a fat man clothed in an officials vest shouted from across the field. A few mumbles and one loud "Yeah", from someone who was too enthusiastic at 8 o'clock on a Saturday morning, answered.

"On your mark!"

Then, before I realized the significance of those words, the gun fired. The crowd roared and I ran. I started shoddily and fell to the back of the main pack. Although a little embarrassed, I knew the runners in the front would be the first to become fatigued, so I continued my pace. The runners ahead of me kicked back dew from the early morning field, and the freshly cut grass stuck to my legs as I ran. I continued my pace.

It didn't take long to reap the benefits of my strategy. Soon into the race several competitors began to falter. I took advantage of the opportunity and passed them. Some runners from the front were already walking, holding their sides with faces of anguish and jealousy as the main pack passed. I felt their pain. I've been tempted to do the same thing in practice several times before. As we approached the forest I noticed where

someone spray painted "1/2 mile" on the ground. The mere thought of the distance to the finish line made my legs sting and throb with excruciating pain.

"Almost a 6th of the way done..." I thought, remembering that the race was a little over three miles long "I need something to do to pass the time."

It felt as if I had been running for ages. I reminisced on practice and how I kept myself busy when there was no one to run with. I thought about my cousin who was a much more experienced runner than I, what did he do when he ran? He always sang "Beatles" songs! I thought hard about what songs I knew and nearly tripped over a log as I debated with myself over whether the song "Live and Let Die" was a Beatles song, or Paul McCartney after the Beatles broke up.

One mile into the race I felt the sharp pain of fatigue in my legs. Paul McCartney escaped my thoughts. I continued my pace, slowly gaining positions along the way. One and a half miles, two miles into the race, my legs were being ripped apart. I no longer thought about passing the time, just finishing the race. Two and a half miles, three miles passed, all brightly displayed with multicolor spray paint which stained a tiny portion of the extensive trail. I followed the guide rope around a tall oak and saw the exit of the woods. It was guarded by a steep hill unlike any that I had run before. My legs already hurt and I could tell right away this hill was a killer. As I pushed up the mini Everest my legs failed me and I fell into the mud. I collected myself but my legs throbbed. I began to walk. A knife was jabbed into my abdomen. Coupled with my exhausted legs the cramps fashioned a formidable obstacle. I contemplated quitting.

"It's been a hard day's night..." I said quietly as I spontaneously started singing. "I've been working like a dog." I slipped but caught myself before I hit the ground. "It's

been a hard day's night; I should be sleeping like a log". The catchy music of the band created well before my time was serving a distinct purpose. Singing the old Beatles song took my mind off the agonizing pain. It created a mental bullet to bite which allowed me to forget the discomfort. I slowly stomped my way up the hill; I saw the finish line. There were people finishing. I needed to hurry. Three people were separated me and my goal.

"We all live in a yellow submarine, yellow submarine, yellow submarine", what a yellow submarine has to do with running I haven't the slightest idea, but it distracted me and that's all that matters. I sprinted; I was passing these people in front of me if it was the last thing I did. I rallied every ounce of energy left in my body and ran my heart out. I easily passed the first two runners, both of which seemed to care little about winning now and more about finishing. The last runner would prove to be much more difficult.

Apparently he was singing "Yellow Submarine" also because he saw me running and began sprinting with me. It was a dead heat. The lead went back and forth, seeing-sawing between me and my competition. Only a few steps left in the entire race, but these final yards were the most important. My adversary gave in. I lost him from my peripheral and heard defeat in his ever increasing breaths. My Beatles magic was too much for him. I crossed the finish line, unable to muster the strength to look at my finish time. I could barely stand; I was exhausted but I was proud. The Jell-O in my legs couldn't ruin my first top ten finish. I owe my triumph to many things: my training, my coach, my friends supporting me, but I can't thank anyone more than the legendary singers and their dulcet tones.

With a little assistance anything is possible. It may be cliché but I understand this firsthand. Success is only truly achieved when you overcome an obstacle to accomplish

something that seems impossible. Whether it's a race or a promotion a little help goes a long way. Especially if you're a Beatles fan, you can always sing their hit song "Help!"

United We Stand

For years labor unions have improved working conditions, benefits, and pay for the American working person. Recent events, however, have people questioning the effectiveness of today's labor unions. Some people believe that labor unions are outdated and unnecessary. They obviously don't realize what unions do; from increasing wages to providing benefits, unions continuously push the American economy in the right direction, as they have for hundreds of years. Labor unions are as effective and necessary today as they were years ago.

Union detractors claim that labor unions are overpricing the American worker, forcing jobs to be outsourced overseas. In some ways this is true, but is it completely bad? No, when you hear about outsourcing of jobs it sounds like a negative occurrence but in fact it is a blessing in disguise. As lower paying industrial jobs go overseas, the people who are losing those jobs are encouraged to get more education and training so they can get a better paying more professional job in America, possibly with one of the numerous American corporations who benefit from outsourcing. In fact, according to McKinsey.com, "for every job outsourced one is created at a higher level, and the outsourcing economy gains more than the country to which the work is outsourced" and "the U.S. economy recovers \$1.13 for every \$1 that goes to an offshore location". The idea of outsourcing often demonized by the media, is actually only helping the American economy.

The most obvious reason to keep labor unions is that they force employers

to provide benefits to their employees. Most employees receive different types of insurance, a retirement package, and sometimes some sort of profit sharing, along with the high wages associated with being a union employee. In this time, when an estimated 45 million Americans (a large portion of them children) are without health insurance, it always helps when their guardians and providers are unionized.

The benefit of unions pushing for higher pay is obvious to most, but what are the benefits of having more money? It's easy to think of several benefits to an increase in pay, but there are some advantages you may not usually consider. You may not realize that higher per-capita income can help reduce crime, boost economy, generate tax revenue, and help to take care of nearly every problem facing today's America (drug and obesity epidemic, governmental budget deficits etc.) According to an article on Encarta.MSN.com, poverty has many devastating effects such as "poor nutrition and physical health problems". The article continues to say that "infectious disease, mental illness, and drug dependence" are higher among people under the poverty level, and more disturbing, "Extended hunger and lack of employment may lead to depression which may sometimes contribute to criminal behavior". Money may not be able to buy happiness but it can be a cure-all for several societal problems. We can thank unions in part for helping raise America's wages.

Besides the fact that having more money reduces crime, improves economy, generates tax revenue, and

counteracts the effects of poverty, another good reason for padding the people's pockets is using the same mentality that President Bush did with his tax cuts. When people have excess money, they will buy more. It's a fact of life. When people buy more, it helps the economy in many ways. One of the most important ways it helps the economy is that it can produce tax revenue, which can be used to help the general public several ways including: paving the streets, funding a school, and paying our policemen and firefighters. We can attribute our safe streets to our hardworking labor unions.

The actions of labor unions result in so many benefits for the American working person it's hard to see why anyone thinks labor unions are outdated. Labor unions are necessary to keep our workers safe, our families fed, and America progressing. Labor unions helped raise the standard of living in America tremendously over the past three centuries, and they will continue for years to come.

References:

Zedillo, Ernesto, et al.

[Http://www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com)

McKinsey & Co., 4 March, 2005

[Http://www.mckinsey.com/ideas/wef2004/takingpulse/offshoring.asp](http://www.mckinsey.com/ideas/wef2004/takingpulse/offshoring.asp)

"People with or without health insurance coverage by selected characteristics: 2002 and 2003", United States Census Bureau, 4 March, 2005,

[Http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/hlthin03/hi03t5.pdf](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/hlthin03/hi03t5.pdf)

"Poverty, effects of" Encarta, 4 March 2005,

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761577020_2/Poverty.html#s122

Hail to the Chieftain

In the epic poem, *Beowulf*, an unknown author in 6th century Europe wrote about the super-human hero Beowulf and his unbelievable exploits. Beowulf is an Anglo-Saxon warrior and an icon to many in the story. But do the qualities of an Anglo-Saxon leader hold up to make a good leader today?

The story of Beowulf is shoddy at best. The plot is a jumbled mess of several stories and at some times can be difficult to follow. One consistent element is the hero Beowulf's larger than life status as a military genius. Referred to as the "war king", Beowulf led the Geats for "50 winters", and "grew old and wise as the warden of the land" (151 ln 2207-2210). Old enemies reminisced their battles, "With Beowulf against them, few could hope to return home" (161 ln 2365-2366). Even Beowulf boasted, referring to all enemies of his homeland, "...I devastated them" (29 ln 424). But do people still look up to military leaders? After the elections between John Kerry and George Bush in 2004, it's hard to argue that military experience doesn't play some role in the leadership equation. Both nominees ravaged each others personal military records with smear advertising campaigns. There always has been a deep respect and admiration for military personnel. They are seen to have the predisposition to be courageous and moral. For this reason, many successful politicians base their entire campaigns on their military background. Their success makes it obvious that military experience is a valued trait for today's leaders, something that hasn't changed from Beowulf's time.

In the poem, Beowulf is described as having "the strength of 30 (men) in the grip of each hand" (27 ln 380-381). Obviously very impressive to Anglo-Saxons in the 6th

century, being able to wrestle is not a big factor in today's selection process. However, Timothy Judge, a professor at the University of Florida, Gainesville, wrote in a 2000 issue of the Journal of Applied Psychology that taller people tend to receive higher evaluations and get paid more when their job has nothing to do with height. He suggests that a subconscious instinct in people makes them more likely to pick the person who is the stronger and healthier looking person. His theory must have some truth because in 21 presidential elections from 1904-1984, taller candidates won 80% of the time. Beowulf's unworldly strength may not only help him survive in the 6th century, but may also allow him to subconsciously persuade voters into making him a leader in today's world.

Beowulf was also a beneficiary to good lineage. He is the son of Ecgtheow, a prestigious warrior, and a nephew of the king of Geat-land. He was born into a royal family and success was hereditary. His good name was no doubt an advantage to Beowulf during his era, and often times this would even help him become a leader today. George Bush is one of many presidents to have used his name to spring him to the presidency. Throughout the country people from prestigious families use their last name to spring them to a powerful position, Beowulf would be no different. Through genetics, name recognition, and an automatic respect, Beowulf could easily use his lineage as an advantage to make him a leader today.

Beowulf was a respected leader in the epic poem named for him, and with all of his impressive qualities and attributes it is without a doubt that he would be a formidable leader in today's political world. The courage and military prowess, the natural strength, and his good bloodline all transcend time to make him a worthy candidate today. Leaders 1,500 years ago still do the same thing leaders do today. They inspire, command, and *lead*

their followers. Washington, Roosevelt, and even Beowulf, they were all leaders and heroes of their own time.

Sources:

Heaney, Seamus. *Beowulf*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000.

Gillis, John. "*Too Small, Too Tall*." 1982.

Judge, Timothy. "The effects of Physical Height on Workplace Success and Income"

Journal of Applied Psychology 2000 Vol. 29 No. 3 428-441.